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Measuring what matters - broadening official statistics:
Session 2: How to react swiftly

How our people are changing to unleash the power of data to change lives

Note by Statistics New Zealand

Summary

In 2014 Statistics New Zealand set itself the strategic vision of unleashing the power of data to change lives. We did this recognising that our purpose was to empower decision-makers by adding value to New Zealand's most important data. We also recognised that our people were central to us realising that vision and it would mean adapting and evolving our culture. Māori (the indigenous people of New Zealand) have a proverb "What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people".

Statistics New Zealand is now the lead agency for government-held data and in 2017 the New Zealand State Services Commissioner designated the Chief Executive of Statistics New Zealand as the Government Chief Data Steward. This involves supporting government agencies to build their capability and manage the data they hold as a valuable strategic asset. Through this role we help government and other users understand what data is telling us, what it can tell us, and importantly what the limitations of the data are.

Whilst the above describes our journey in terms of what we do, what we want to share now are the new ideas that are shaping our implementation of our strategy, in other words, how we do this. This document outlines some of the initiatives Statistics New Zealand is working on with its people and culture on the journey towards becoming an organisation that anticipates and reacts swiftly and is agile when thinking about how we work.

The document is presented to the Conference of European Statisticians' seminar on "Measuring what matters – broadening official statistics", session 2 "How to react swiftly" for discussion.

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I. Introduction

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast"

1. Statistics New Zealand's strategic direction is compelling and necessary. We have traditionally added value to New Zealand through collecting, processing, and analysing data to create official statistics. Due to our expertise in data management and protection, we have also been trusted with the mandate to lead the Official Statistics System (OSS). We have performed this function reliably and with care to provide robust and relevant statistics to inform decision-making in New Zealand. However, our environment is changing and, while we must retain our core role as a trusted and independent provider of official statistics, we need to grow to respond to our changing environment.

2. We are acknowledged as the only government agency solely focussed on data and so we have knowledge and expertise that can be applied more broadly to support other government agencies to realise the potential of government data as strategic assets. This approach has wider benefits than just the OSS.

3. Now, and in the future, how we work and the scope of our work in changing from our historical remit as a provider of official statistics to a new expanded remit focusing on unleashing the power and value of data. The expected scale of change to achieve this is significant, however, without this accelerated evolutionary change, Statistics New Zealand runs the risk of losing relevance and not delivering the value New Zealand requires.

4. In bringing our people along on the strategic journey and examining our culture Statistics New Zealand has undertaken many initiatives, we have selected three of these to share in this paper; character, agility, and capability. These initiatives are still in progress.

II. IDARE (to unleash to power of data) - Character

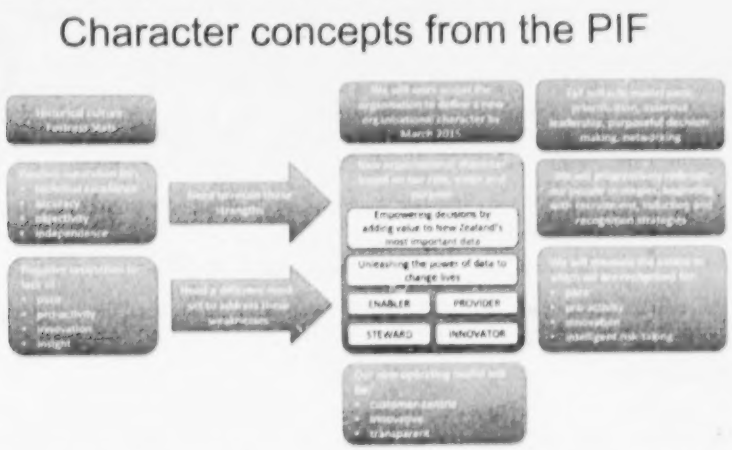
Its character is the only sustainable point of difference for any organisation.

5. An organisation's character is shaped by the shared values, norms and expectations that guide how we approach our work, interact with each other and interact with our customers. Statistics New Zealand's character has long been represented by attributes associated with many national statistics offices (statistical excellence, integrity, confidentiality and data security) and leading, connecting and communicating.

6. With the launch of the new strategy in 2014, Statistics New Zealand recognised that its current character could negatively impact on the changes that need to be made, a recent Performance Improvement Framework Review (PIF)[1] had also provided in-depth feedback on the character of Statistics New Zealand. This feedback and the initial identification of changes required are outline in Figure 1 below.

[1] Performance Improvement Framework – New Zealand Government http://www.ssc.govt.New Zealand/performance-improvement-framework

Figure I
Character concept from the Framework Review (PIF)


Character concepts from the PIF
Empowering decisions by adding value to New Zealand's most important data
Unleashing the power of data to change lives
ENABLER
PROVIDER
STEWARD
INNOVATOR

7. Late in 2014, and through early 2015 Statistics New Zealand, and the Executive Leadership Team in particular, undertook a significant organisational consultation initiative to review and revise its organisational character so that it best represented the positive journey of change we were all embarking on. The primary mechanism used for this was a variety of workshops used to gain insight from across the organisation and focussed on the following questions:

(a) What makes this organisation feel different or unique from our competitors?

(b) Describe the personality or character of this organisation.

(c) What is central to who we are as an organisation that should never change?

8. We needed to describe how we would represent the new strategic direction internally and what would our customers and stakeholders see externally. All through these workshops curiosity, pace and integrity were consistent character traits to be represented.

9. The interpretation and visualisation of the new Statistics New Zealand character was finalised late in 2015, with IDARE being the selected acronym representing **I**nquisitive, **D**riven, **A**gile, **R**esilient, **E**ngaging. It is a state of mind and mode of behaviour that will enable us individually and collectively to continue to perform our core statistical office remit and further expand into our roles of enabler, innovator, and steward. Our aspiration is to respond to the challenge "I dare to unleash the power of data".

10. Throughout 2016 and 2017 we progressively worked to embed IDARE across the organisation, key to this has been a significant communications effort and the development of many supporting materials which are focussed on visibility of the IDARE character. IDARE is now reflected in all our job description as behavioural competencies, and is a core part of our recruitment and retention strategies. There are also important symbols of our character around the office, including printing on our ID lanyards and posters on our noticeboards and areas where we congregate.

III. Agility - developing an agile core and the strategic partners

11. To pursue our strategic direction and achieve our goal to increase the value of data, we need to change the way we work at Statistics New Zealand. Originally outlined as part of the change leadership required to deliver to the new strategic direction, the term 'agile core' was used to describe the fact that Statistics New Zealand needed to move to agile concepts and work styles throughout the organisation, especially in our core business. The term has evolved now to describe the overall positioning required to become a more innovative and agile organisation.

12. As an organisation we had some uncertainty when deciding how to introduce these concepts into the organisation:

(a) How do we learn, and be agile / fast paced at the same time?

(b) We are not quite sure what this fully looks like or understand the capabilities and supporting frameworks to make this work.

We adopted a 'start small, learning as we go' approach.

13. To introduce the concept into the organisation we jumped into the use of some of the new approaches straight away, however this highlighted that we were missing a number of foundational pieces. We learnt that our people needed to upskill to participate fully and get the most value out of these new approaches and to think more about how we sustained these new skills and ways of working when people changed teams or initiatives finished.

14. With a clearer focus, we created a list of potential starters for innovation forums and accelerators.[2] We prioritised and selected initiatives based on do-ability and scale and trialled these between April and the end of June 2016. We partnered with 3 vendors and asked them to work in a collaborative way to help Statistics New Zealand learn.

15. The initial trials were successful, however, our internal capability and capacity in these areas was not sufficient to introduce the concepts and develop our staff in a sustainable way. In 2017 we ran a tender process, contracting two vendors who work collaboratively to provide us with guidance and technical support. These are referred to as our strategic partners.

16. The following details the benefits achieved from one of our most recent engagement with our strategic partners, this work is in relation to our review of our integrated data services:

- **Immediate and real customer focus** – Early work by the teams highlighted the discrepancy between our assumptions and external customers' described pain points;
- **Positive customer feedback** – Customers interviewed by the Access Pathways teams have responded very positively to the fact we are seeking to understand their needs and pain points;
- **Staff focus** - Staff involved in the initiative have responded positively to the experience so far, noting how the agile and lean approaches have elevated their levels of focus and allowed them to dive into the core of our customers' problems.

[2] Accelerators
- 12 week immersive programme, highly structured, lean startup based
- Selected teams, dedicated co-working location
- Mentor driven, demo day at the end of programme, investment focus

- **Engagement** - There has been a high level of external engagement with the initiative. This includes the digital engagement via the Livestream feature on YouTube.[3]
- **Sustained culture change** - After going through this process, the Access Pathways teams have shown an appetite to continue working in agile and lean ways beyond the original working period set out for this initiative because of the benefit it has on their ability to generate more value.

17. There is still a long way to go with this initiative, and it is fair to say that it is quite some way from being fully embedded. To leverage off the momentum of the activities to date, to grow our internal capabilities further, and to get the benefits of these new ways of working, there are areas that need further consideration before scaling these processes out. These include:

(a) The physical environment – Further changes to our spaces are needed to support agile and lean activities. For example, we will need:

- more appropriate space and equipment for visual management;
- more appropriate spaces for activities that have different noise levels, for example having a video conference meeting space without proper sound proofing is very problematic;
- more-open innovation spaces that allow easy access for staff to see activities. This will contribute to the feeling that innovation is part of the Statistics New Zealand DNA;

(b) Technology - our technology environment requires some additional flexibility to support the tools needed by teams. This includes:

- appropriate equipment to set up livestreaming;
- tools that allow video-conferencing with external customers;
- digital tools to support activities like journey/process mapping.

(c) Internal capacity and commitment - As we look to scale more activities we have identified that there isn't the capacity or commitment levels needed to make significant changes to how we work. The challenge lies with trying to get people to participate who are 100% dedicated. In order to get the behaviours Statistics New Zealand needs for a high performance culture, they need to be immersed in the environment. The Access Pathways team in their recent showcase has said immersion is the main contribution to fostering the behavioural change they were exhibiting.

(d) Funding and resourcing – We need to be realistic about how much we can achieve in the innovation/agile space given resource and funding constraints. We are largely reliant on finding suitable prioritised and funded initiatives to demonstrate the value of these new ways of working. With this comes the risk that, with only a small number of initiatives being able to be run using these new methods, we may not come close to achieving the critical mass, or tipping point, required to effect significant, lasting change.

[3] The showcases for Statistics Unleashed were provided via YouTube Live streaming, and were available online – example https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwcCW23k_Jo

IV. Capability – statistical, data and analytic (SDA) job family review

18. One of the most significant people related initiatives is the statistical, data and analytic job family review. This is a hugely important step in ensuring that we have the right mix of internal capability to support our vision to unleash the power of data to change lives.

19. We had several organisational drivers for the review:

- Our current statistical job family hasn't been reviewed in 12 years and is feeling out of date;
- We have our vision to unleash the power of data to change lives and our goals of increasing the value of data for decision-makers. This strategic direction has reset our core offerings and redefined our role in the data ecosystem;
- We need to be clear about which capabilities and skills we will need to deliver our core offerings both now and in the future;
- We have taken up the leadership of data and analytics for the state sector – in order to effectively lead in this space we need to be able to share how we are building our people capability. Developing a capability framework and position descriptions that are up to date will help us to do this;
- An updated job family will help us evolve to meet future demands in a data world that is changing all of the time.

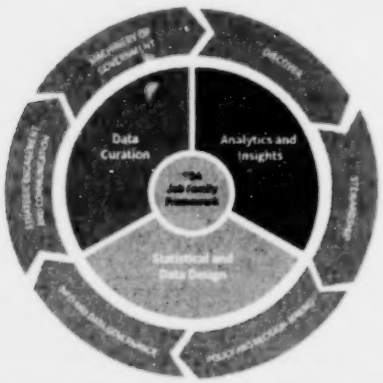
20. To respond confidently to these challenges, we need to be able to work differently and to grow and evolve our organisation's capability. We also need to remain flexible and be able to change to respond to the demands of our external environment.

21. Commencing in June 2016, the SDA job family review involved a cross-organisational team who were nominated as the subject matter experts across a range of roles and levels representing all aspects of Statistics New Zealand's statistical, data and analytic functions. The work involved two accelerators, the first of which was focussed on designing a functional framework for statistical, data and analytic capability utilising tools such as Target Organisational Capability Model, the Strategic Plan and the Statistical Capability Framework; the second involved three design sub-groups from the original accelerator team who developed the roles and competencies in each of the functional areas.

22. Between the first and second accelerator engagement was undertaken with staff and external bodies which included government, the analytics industry and national statistical offices. Extensive internal consultation was undertaken during April and May 2017, this consultation and engagement was via workshops, discussion boards and group meetings and participation in the various forums demonstrated a high level of staff engagement. All feedback was referenced and responded to in the finalised design.

23. In November 2017 the design of the SDA job family was finalised. This includes functional framework, position descriptions and career pathways. The functional framework is provided below to demonstrate the degree of change required.

Figure II
Statistical, data & analytics job family framework



FUNCTION	STATISTICAL AND DATA DESIGN	DATA CURATION	ANALYTICS AND INSIGHTS
WORK STREAMS	• Design • Professional Domain Expertise	• Data Sourcing & Preparation • Data Management & Stewardship	• Statistical Delivery • Statistical Insights

24. The statistical, data, and analytic job family review is one of the first steps in guiding the capability development that Statistics New Zealand needs over the years ahead. The transition to the new job family will be complex and needs careful planning and implementation. We are starting to think about the work that would be involved in doing this, including setting up a formal programme of work and establish an oversight programme board.

V. Conclusions

25. In this document we have provided an overview of three key initiatives Statistics New Zealand has been undertaking to invest in our people. We want our people to participate to their full potential in an organisation that is positioning itself to be more than an official statistics agency and to enable them to anticipate and react swiftly in a modern data world.

26. We are moving fast and doing great things. The dilemma we face is that the world around us is moving even faster and the goal posts keep shifting. We need to be able to anticipate more and respond quickly to the world around us. We need to operate in a way that is faster, smarter, and more innovative.

27. These investments in our people are showing positive results, we are "seeing the new, energised Statistics weaving through what we do", and we can point to many innovations being undertaken in an agile way:

- More meaningful insights for our customers in video releases:
    - More than 3600 views on Prices' shrinkflation video;
    - Livestreaming our showcases.
- Featuring more on breakfast television;

- Greater connections to key policy initiatives and moving at pace with our new government ministers;
- Working with our strategic partners and embracing the agile and lean behaviours to generate greater value;
- Bringing to light and realising more internal innovation through several initiatives showing what our people can really do when they're given the time and space;
- Opening our first international data lab in Sydney, and seeing it used to develop a new deprivation index;
- Delivering a more modern population and dwelling census in 2018.

28. However, we need to keep our focus, it is all too easy to 'do' innovation in pockets, respond quickly in reactive situations and be agile at the margins.

29. Our latest evolution of our journey with our people and culture is to develop an overarching theme for all our people and culture-focussed initiatives called "The Statistics Way". The Statistics Way is all about what makes us 'us' at Statistics New Zealand, such as what we value in our people and the behaviours which need to underpin the way we do things every day. The Statistics Way includes and builds on the initiatives we have outlined as well as several others, two of which are worth mentioning briefly:

(a) Coaching for performance. Coaching is about helping people create a positive, directed change in their working lives. It's about managers helping people develop their potential and being timely and agile in their support of their teams. Managers have recently worked through coaching workshops aimed at increasing their knowledge of the coaching process, and starting to develop the skills needed to be an effective coach. Two toolkits have been developed and recently launched, one for coaches and one for those being coached. This will continue to be embedded through 2018.

(b) Our enabling environment. This includes the technology and workplace design that enables our people and their advancement of our strategic direction. This work is re-starting after being disrupted by a major (the Kaikoura) earthquake in November 2016. All staff are currently participating in the design needs for this work starting with completing the Leesman survey.

30. "He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata" - "What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people". We hope we have demonstrated this to you as we continue on our exciting journey.